

Beau Brummels of Gangland and the Killing They Did in Feuds



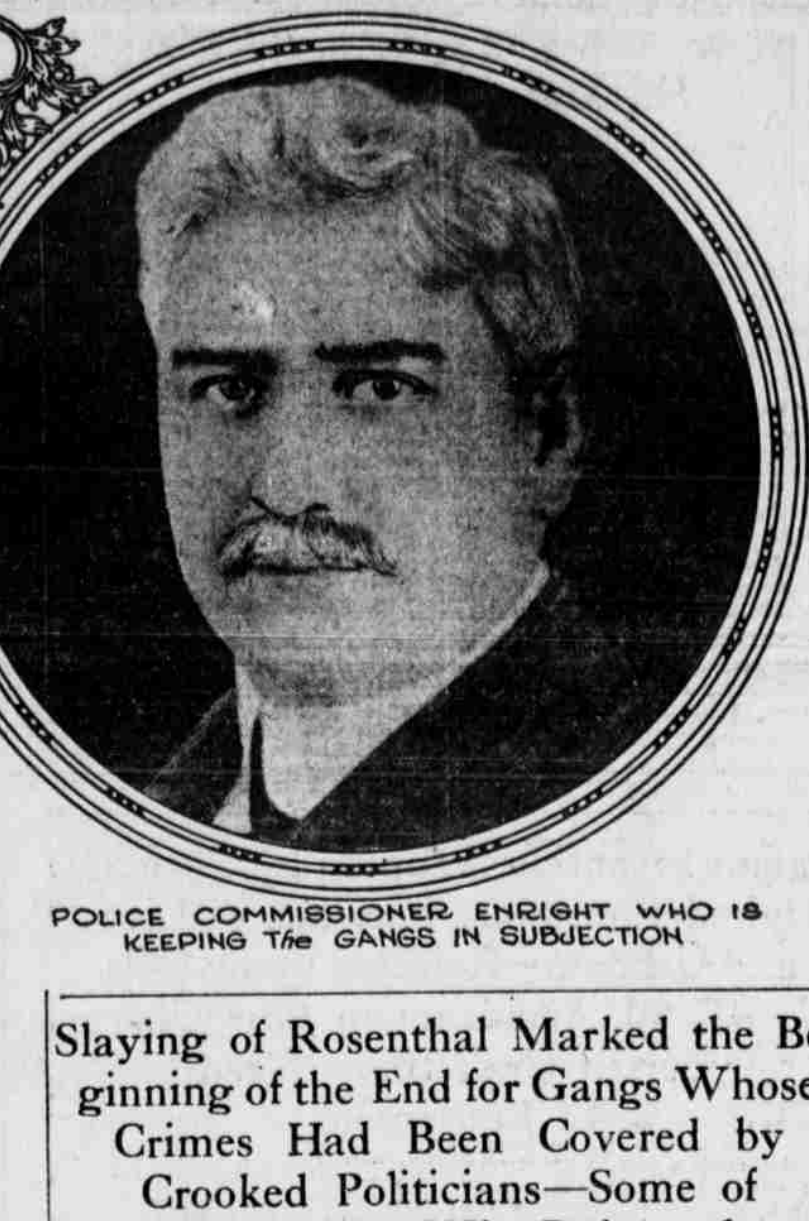
ARTHUR WOODS, WHO PUT THE GANGS WHERE THEY BELONG.



HERMAN ROSENTHAL WHOSE KILLING MARKED THE BEGINNING OF THE END FOR GANGDOM.



WILLIAM F. BAKER, WHOSE CLUBBING ORDER WHEN POLICE COMMISSIONER WAS A BLOW TO THE GANGSTERS.



POLICE COMMISSIONER ENRIGHT WHO IS KEEPING THE GANGS IN SUBJECTION.

Slaying of Rosenthal Marked the Beginning of the End for Gangs Whose Crimes Had Been Covered by Crooked Politicians—Some of Old Leaders Who Reformed

approaching the end of his activities. Besides these there were numerous other fights.

The Rosenthal Murder.

The murder of Herman Rosenthal by Gyp the Blood and other gangsters marked the beginning of the end for the gangsters as powerful forces. That created such a stir, and the need of reform became so pressing, that thereafter the power of the gangs waned, until to-day there are no gangs worthy of the name. The Hudson Dusters are probably the best known of the present day gangsters, but they have given little or no trouble for some years, although they have had frequent fights with the Marginals and used to be bitter enemies of the Tanner Smiths.

A remnant of the Gophers is left, but they too give little trouble. The police have really had no gangs worthy of the name to contend with since Commissioner Woods started his crusade in 1914 and sent almost 200 of them to prison.

It is largely, if not altogether, a matter of individual opinion as to who was the greatest gangster that New York ever saw. Having a special knowledge of the viciousness and criminality of one particular gangster, one naturally reaches the conclusion that that gangster was the greatest of them all, yet in fact there may have been other gangsters who were braver and more dangerous. The opinion of the writer is about equally divided between Paul Kelly and Monk Eastman and curiously enough both of these men have reformed and are leading decent lives. Certainly there have been few gangsters who wielded more power than Kelly and Eastman did in their palmy days. Kelly had the old Five Points gang with more than 1,500 members, and besides this he controlled many smaller gangs whose activities were more local. Perhaps Kelly had at the height of his powers some 4,000 men under his command. Eastman's power was hardly less, with his gang of 1,000 men and many smaller gangs which flocked to his colors in the event of a gang war.

Kelly had a remarkable career, which space prevents going into in detail here. He was an East Side boy, and became a prize fighter by virtue of having whipped the mascot of the old Granite Athletic Club. After that he became a professional, fighting a draw with Tommy Dixon, whipping Bill Barrett and fighting good fights with many others. Then he became foreman for an Italian contracting company, saw the opening in militant politics and organized the Paul A. Kelly Association, which became one of the strongest organizations in the United States and was a controlling power in East Side politics for a long time. When the reform waves began to appear Kelly saw the handwriting on the wall and quit. He is now making money and is estimated to be worth a considerable fortune.

Monk Eastman began his gang career as a bouncer in the New Irving Hall on the Bowery, and because of his warlike ambitions and his ability as a rough and tumble fighter and gangster he rose rapidly. It wasn't many years before he had his own gang and was a power in the territory in which he operated. Eastman was arrested for several shootings and finally he was sent to prison and the leadership of his gang fell to Kid Twist. For several years the police heard little or nothing of Eastman, but when the United States entered the war the old gangster enlisted under his real name with the Twenty-seventh Division, the old New York National Guard. He served with honor in all the battles in which that division participated, and when he came back Gov. Smith restored his citizenship on the recommendation of his commanding officers. Eastman now has a good job and is a decent citizen.

It is a fact that the war and the American army were responsible for the regeneration of many of New York's old gang fighters. There were many of them in both the Seventy-seventh and the Twenty-seventh divisions, and they made good soldiers. Such gang fighters as "Puggy" McKay, "Lefty" O'Neill and "Fat Face" Wilson of the old C. B. Barn gang entered the army and became sergeants and good soldiers.

Gangs kept invading each other's territory to hold up the gambling houses and in 1912 this trouble culminated in a general gang war in which some forty or fifty battles were fought. Some of the most important of these were the conflict between the Red Poppers and the Duffy Hills in 1912 street, in which four passengers in a passing trolley car were struck by bullets; the fight in a Tenth avenue saloon in which James Dunn, leader of the Gophers, was killed; the row between the Joe Bakers and the Morellos at Third avenue and 114th street, with death list of five, and several fights between the Jack Zelig gang and the gang commanded by Chick Tricker, a gangster of the old days who was fast

carried two guns, one under his hat and the other strapped under his hump. And in the Brooklyn Bridge district was the gang controlled by "Yakky Yake" Brady, while further uptown there were such gangs as the "Morans" under the leadership of Mickey Moran, and the old San Juan negro gang, which held forth in the district north of Columbus Circle and west to the North River. Hell's Kitchen had half a dozen gangs, all vicious and criminal, while Manhattanville, Chelsea, Yorkville and the Greenwich districts were alive with bands of ruffians, although they never approached the power of the Kellys and the Gophers and the Eastmans and some of the others.

Some of these gangs continued for years under their old names, while others under new leaders acquired new titles and in many instances became known to the police as new gangs. But there were so many of them that it is impossible to chronicle all of their names excepting those of the most important, let alone attempt to tell of their doings and the doings of the various members. By 1910 many of these gangs had disappeared, or had changed their names, or had been broken up by the police. In that year the gangs that gave the police the most trouble were these, as listed by the detective bureau, with the number of their members and their hangouts:

Car Barn Gang—Fifty members. Hangout at Ninetieth street and Second avenue. Police assassins and with record of eight policemen put in the hospital, Carry guns.

Tanner Smith Gang—Thirty members. West Side ruffians operating in the vicinity of Tenth avenue and the Twenties. Attacked four policemen within few months. Carry guns.

Corcoran Boast Gang—Thirty members. From first avenue and Thirty-seventh street. Carry slung shots and revolvers. All around thugs.

Lush Lobs—Twenty-five members. Hangout in Doyers street. Thieves and pickpockets. Generally unarmed.

Canary Island Gang—Twenty members. Operate from 125th street north to Harlem River on Fifth avenue. Carry brass knuckles and slung shots.

Humpty Jackson Gang—Fifty members. Operate from a graveyard in the East Side near Fourteenth street and Second avenue. Stickup men, strong arm workers and thieves.

Jungle Band—West Fifty-third street. Twenty members. Thieves and footpads. Carry guns and knives.

San Juan Hill Gang—Forty members. Carry guns. Tenth avenue and Sixty-third street.

James Shields Gang—Twenty members. Operate on Second avenue about Forty-seventh street. Always armed.

Gas House Gang—Fifty members. Thugs. Second avenue and Twentieth street. Carry guns and blackjacks.

These gangs became so pernicious in their attacks on the police and on private citizens and their plundering and robberies got so bold that the then Commissioner Baker of the Police Department was compelled to send out an order for the police to use their nightsticks with a vengeance every

time they were attacked by the thugs. This resulted in a great many broken heads, but the method was so efficacious that the gangs were practically broken up, assisted by the activity of the Central office detectives in arresting many of the leaders. It is worthy of note, in fact, that every time the patrolmen were allowed to use their clubs freely in dealing with the gangsters the gangs have been curbed. There have been few gangsters with nerve enough to stand up to a policeman in fair combat, even though they were armed with a blackjack.

During 1909 and 1910 the Car Barn gang and the Humpty Jacksons were perhaps the most dangerous of these gangs. The Car Barn crowd was particularly vicious and cowardly in its attacks upon the police. They never layd a copper and gave him a fair fight; it was their custom to hide on the roof tops and greet the policeman with a shower of bricks and stones. If one of them found its mark and stretched the officer cold on the pavement the Car Barn gangsters then indulged in the gentle practice of "hoofing" him; that is, they kicked and pounded him while he lay unconscious and helpless. These thugs inaugurated a veritable reign of terror in the neighborhood of Second avenue and Ninetieth street, and on one occasion, after they had beaten and stoned a policeman so badly that he had to be taken to a hospital they became so bold that they posted this sign throughout the neighborhood:

THIS IS A DEAD LINE FOR COPS. NO TRESPASSING UNDER PENALTY OF DEATH. THE CAR BARN GANG.

And that they meant this in good faith was shown by the fact that within a week two policemen were stoned and beaten in that territory.

Contemporary with the Car Barn gang and the Humpty Jacksons, and just about as bad, was the gang controlled by Tanner Smith. The activities of this outfit have added interest now because of the fact that Smith, whose real name was Thomas Smith, was shot and killed over a card game in the Marginal Club about a week ago. About 1910, and for two years thereafter, the Tanner Smiths were a thorn in the side of the police. They used attilettos to a large extent, and several policemen were badly injured in encounters with the thugs. This gang was finally broken up after Arthur Woods became Police Commissioner and started his crusade against gangsters. Smith was sent to prison for a year and several others of the gang also got prison terms.

When Smith got out of prison he saw the error of his ways and reformed, although the police declare that it was the influence of his sister that made him a decent citizen once more. Smith's sister was loyal to him throughout his career as a gangster, and she used to tell the police that eventually she would get her brother out of the company of his evil associates and get him started on the right path. She succeeded, and after he came out of prison and got his citi-

zenship back Tanner Smith became as decent a citizen as anybody. He got a job as a beef handler on the docks, later became a boss stevedore, and when he was killed last week Tanner Smith had amassed a fortune of some \$100,000.

The police helped him, and many of the officers who had been his enemies in the old days became his best friends when he turned straight. Only two days before his death Smith sent word to the writer that he had reformed and was going straight and doing well, and asked that if his name and the name of his old gang was mentioned in these articles it be noted that he was now straight. And in justice to Tanner Smith it ought to be said that he not only went straight himself but he persuaded others of his old gang to reform too. The police say that the reformation of at least fifteen men was due to Tanner Smith, and that he persuaded others of his old gang to reform too. The police say that the reformation of at least fifteen men was due to Tanner Smith, and that he persuaded others of his old gang to reform too. The police say that the reformation of at least fifteen men was due to Tanner Smith, and that he persuaded others of his old gang to reform too.

expressed great indignation that a crime had been committed. Ploggi stayed in hiding for a few days while the politicians who controlled the election services of the Five Points arranged certain matters and then he surrendered. Of course he pleaded self-defense.

"Biff" Ellison, who was sent to Sing Sing for his part in the killing of Bill Harrington in Paul Kelly's New Brighton dive, came to the Bowery from Maryland when he was in his early twenties. He got a job as a bouncer in Pat Flynn's saloon in 34 Bond street, and advanced rapidly in the estimation of gangland, because he was young and husky and when he hit a man that man went down and stayed down. That was how he got his nickname—he used to be always threatening "biff" someone. And usually he did as he threatened. Ellison was a dandy, too, so careful of his physical appearance that he did not always deign to fight with his fists and take a chance on messing up his manly beauty. The blackjack and the beer bottle were his favorite weapons, and many a tough customer had he put away with them. After that it was his custom to kick them while they were down, and if the fancy seized him, to gouge out an eye or perhaps chew off an ear.

Ellison was of great value around election time, and Tammany Hall politicians recognized it. Consequently he became a person of some importance, and so was able to give a racket once a year under the auspices of the "Biff Ellison Association," which was Biff Ellison and nobody else, and which netted him usually around \$1,500 or \$2,000. At one time he and another gangster got together and established Parella Hall, near Cooper Union, but he quit that finally because it involved most of his time between Chick Tricker's saloon in 128 Park Row and Nigger Mike Salter's place in Pell street. When he went into the New Brighton and killed Bill Harrington, he was really after Paul Kelly, although the reason has never appeared. Possibly it was merely because he felt the thirst for blood, and was jealous of Kelly and the Kelly power and influence.

Ellison, a gangster who was small but vicious, with him in the job that finished Harrington. Kelly and Kelly had been enemies for a long time, and when he and Ellison entered the New Brighton the night of the murder Harrington saw trouble in the air. He immediately yelled to Paul Kelly to get his gun, which was a distinct violation of gangland's principles and beliefs, which are that every man must fight his own battles and must not be warned when his murder is imminent. Riley immediately turned and shot Harrington through the head and then he and Ellison opened fire on everybody in the place, but particularly on Paul Kelly. Half an hour later the police entered the place and found not a soul, nothing but the lifeless body of Harrington on the floor. A few days later, however, Kelly sent word from Harlem for the police to come and get him. He had been shot, and seriously, but a great many others had been shot, but the police found only the dead. Riley died before he could be tried, but Ellison was sent to prison for his share in the affair. He is there now.

The Beginning of the End.

All of these things happened during the first few years of the present century, at a time when the power of the gangs was at its height, when Tammany controlled the politics of the city but when uneasy farmers of reform were beginning to hit the Bowery and Chinatown and the other favorite haunts of the gangsters. In those days there were innumerable gangs. The entire city was infested with them, and notable gangsters, men who were vicious criminals and had committed more murders than they had fingers and toes, were as numerous as they are scarce now. But the principal gangs of that time were Paul Kelly's Five Points, which had some 1,500 members and was supreme in the territory between Broadway and the Bowery, City Hall Park and Fourteenth street; the Eastmans, with 100 fighting men, controlling the territory between Monroe street and the Bowery and the East River; the Gas House Gang, with about 200 members, holding forth in Third avenue between Eleventh and Eighteenth streets; and the Gophers with 500 members and the terror of that district in Seventh and Tenth avenues between Fourteenth and Forty-second streets.

Some of the other prominent gangs of the period were the Battery Gang, only a shadow of its former self because it was cut off from the others and was confined to the district, and the gang of Humpty Jackson, that little hunchback who became one of the most doughty gangsters of the city in spite of his physical deformity and who

was just a nice little boy, a bank clerk perhaps, or a soda water jerk, or something equally harmless. But he carried a gun always and he knew how to use it. There have been many stories told about the real reason for the killing of Kid Twist. For several years after it happened it was the fashion in gangland every time a gangster was arrested for some one to come out in print with the "real reason" for the murder. Ploggi himself told two or three different stories, but when he was brought to trial he seemed so very innocent that the court looked so very innocent that the court gave him but a year in Elmira, which, as he expressed it with scorn, "he could stand on his head."

The court of course had no way of knowing just how bad Louie the Lump was, how he was going to turn out afterward. It is a matter of record, however, that Ploggi was just as crooked after he came out of Elmira as when he went in.

There were a lot of shots fired in the fight in which Twist was killed, because Ploggi and a dozen or more other Five Points men opened up on Twist and another Eastman gangster known as Cyclone Lewis, whose real name was Vach Lewis, a wrestler and strong man, and both of them had several bullets in them. A girl was shot too, Carroll Terry, a Coney Island chorus girl who had lived with Ploggi and who later transferred her shifting affections to Twist, probably because he beat her often and more satisfactorily than Ploggi was able to do. It has been said that Ploggi killed Twist over the girl, and it has also been said that he shot the Eastman gangster in revenge for the killing of the girl. But who was a Five Points man and whose death of course had to be avenged by the blood of an Eastman. It was Spanish Louie Basel, by the way, who killed the Bottler, and although the shooting was witnessed by more than thirty men nobody ever was able to tell the police anything about it.

The Killing of Kid Twist.

At any rate, Louie the Lump came upon Twist and "Cyclone" Lewis in a beer garden at Coney Island and an argument and quarrel followed. In Alfred Henry Lewis's account of the shooting it is said that Twist, who was half drunk and in great good humor, made Louie the Lump jump out of a window, and that the killing was largely due to the natural feeling of Ploggi that he had been insulted. Newspaper stories of the time give various versions of what happened. There is no question, however, that after the argument Ploggi came out of the beer garden and had speech with several other members of the Five Points gang who clustered about him, and with the driver of an ancient coupe which had drawn up near the curb. This vehicle moved down the street until it stood directly in front of the door of the beer garden.

Some fifteen minutes later a gangster of the Five Points whose face was not known to Twist went into the beer garden and told Twist and Lewis that Carroll Terry was outside and wanted to see them. Twist thought a great deal of the girl, who was turning considerable money over to him, and he and Lewis left the garden and went into the street. But as they reached the sidewalk Ploggi stepped up and laced a bullet through Twist's head. Before Lewis could draw his revolver the rest of the gang opened up and he died before he could fire a shot. It happened that the Terry girl came along during the height of the battle, and as soon as Ploggi saw her he fired at her, the bullet striking her in the shoulder. Then Ploggi jumped into the coupe and escaped, while the other gangsters mingled with the crowd and

Murders Resulting From Rivalry Among Gangsters Were Many, but None, Perhaps, More Thrilling Than the "Bumping Off" of Kid Twist by "Louie the Lump"—How "Dandy Johnny" Came to Grief Through Vanity

This is the final one of a series of three articles in which the full history of the gangs and gangsters of New York, from the earliest days, is told for the first time.

By HERBERT ASBURY.

NINE persons out of ten in New York probably imagine that the gangster who ruled—or at least helped the politician to rule—the lower East and West sides and other parts of the city for so many years was the sort of Apache they see in the moving pictures and on the stage, with an evilly glinting eye, a left shirt, a plaid cap drawn down over the forehead, and a swagger that in itself was enough to proclaim that here was a man bent on evilment. That is the gangster as the vivid imagination of the moving picture director has conceived him, and he is the sort of gangster that never did exist outside of the movies.

The really dangerous gangster hardly ever looked the part, although there have been, of course, gangsters who resembled what they were. Jack Sirocco, for instance, always wore a red brown shirt and never shaved as often as he might have done; "Nigger Mike" Salter, who kept a notorious dive in Chatham Square, was usually dressed roughly and took great pride in his uncouthness, and even the redoubtable Monk Eastman, as brave and as dangerous a gangster as ever blackjacked a voter or robbed a stuss game, was never any great beauty. He seemed always to need a haircut, and very often he would be seen patrolling his territory—his gang at the height of its powers was the great rival of Paul Kelly's Five Points—with a soft shirt, and a cap drawn over his eyes, or lounging at ease in his favorite dive clad in his shirt sleeves and without a collar. But men like Eastman and Salter and Sirocco were exceptions. Usually the gangster was something of a dandy, even away back in the days of the Dead Rabbits, the Bowery Boys, and the Shirt Tails—so called, by the way, because they wore their shirts outside their trousers when they had their big fights with other gangs. He shaved often, he dressed well, he had his hair oiled and plastered down and his hands manicured, and he was always very careful about his appearance.

Fastidious Gangsters.

Such men as Paul Kelly and his satellite Louie Ploggi, better known as "Louie the Lump"; "Biff" Ellison, "East Em Up" Jack McManus and others of the highest rank in gangland were more like clerks than criminals and gangsters. Some of these men were extremely fastidious, so much so that they affected individual peculiarities of adornment, even though such things distinguished them and made it easy enough for the detectives to recognize them and determine largely by that who had committed some particular crime. Still, in those days the gangsters who deserved because they provided the crooked politicians with crime short of murder was usually pushed up by the crooked politicians, and even murder was openly winked at, provided the gangster was not foolish enough to murder some one of prominence.

Yet there have been numerous instances of cases where gangsters have betrayed themselves and got the prison terms they deserved because they wouldn't leave behind them when on mischief bent some pet bit of adornment. The case of "Dandy Johnny"

Dolan of the old Whyo gang is a good case in point. "Dandy Johnny" was one of the shining lights of the Whyos, an old time gang that flourished in the late '90s and which was the ruling power in the old Greenwich Village district, a gang which got its name through the call of its members, "Wheoooo." That is a call that country boys have used for years, and one that every country boy knows, but the Whyos adapted it to city uses and became famous through their employment of it.

"Dandy Johnny" was as proud of his manly beauty as he was of his ability as a yegg and loft worker. He had a carved cane which he had made at considerable expense and which was the apple of his eye. He went nowhere without it, even taking it with him when he went to steal and plunder and kill. The police knew he had it, and more than once a detective found it where "Dandy Johnny" had carelessly left it behind him in a loft he had burglarized. But it always found its way into the hands of a friendly politician and was returned to the gangster, because in those days the Whyos were politically powerful, and Whyos were politically powerful, and "Dandy Johnny" could wield a black-jack on election day with a certainty of effect that endeared him greatly to the politicians. He was fairly safe, no matter what he did and no matter where he left his cane, so long as he remained in his own territory.

"Dandy Johnny's" Downfall.

But "Dandy Johnny" got ambitious, and hearing of a particularly rich loft laden with great booty, he went into another gang's territory over in Greene street to pull off the job. Unfortunately for him he found it necessary to kill a night watchman, and in the excitement left his cane lying on the floor beside the man's body. The trail was plain, and so "Dandy Johnny" was hanged, because all the politicians had no influence enough to save him from a murder charge that proved itself. Even the Judges knew that nobody but "Dandy Johnny" could have taken that cane there, and although the gangster was well supplied with alibis they were of no avail.

Louis Ploggi, known throughout gangland as "Louie the Lump" because of his chunky build, resembled a Little Lord Fauntleroy dressed in modern clothing when he shot and killed Kid Twist at Coney Island in 1905. Ploggi owed allegiance to Paul Kelly's gang, which was the old Five Points gang with modernized methods, while Kid Twist at that time was leader of the Monk Eastmans, the great rival gang of the Kellys, by virtue of the fact that Monk Eastman himself was up the river doing a bid for robbery and because Richie Fitzpatrick had been killed. Fitzpatrick aspired to the leadership of the Eastmans after Monk was sent away, and Kid Twist seemed to fall in with his plans. He arranged a conference of the leading members of the gang, but something happened there and Ploggi was found by the police with a bullet in his heart. Kid Dahl, a friend of Twist's, arranged things so that he was arrested, and turned up in court with a perfect alibi, so that nobody was ever brought to book for the crime. Dahl was later rewarded for his services by being given the Five Points gangster called "The Bottler." Twist gave that name to Dahl, although Twist did not own it. But Twist very conveniently and kindly arranged for "The Bottler's" murder, and Dahl took over the stuss game as a matter of course.

Louis the Lump was only 17 when he killed Twist, but he was a bad man and a dangerous man, although he didn't look it. To all appearances he